

Message Text

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ACTION SSM-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-04 NSC-05
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 ACDA-07 IO-13
/082 W

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P R 211352Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2888
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 06463

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MARR, XF
SUBJECT: BRIEFING FOR FCO ON SINAI FIELD MISSION AND
FCO STUDY

REFERENCE: LONDON 5821 (NOTAL)

1. WILLIAM KONTOS AND JAMES WALLEN OF THE SINAI SUPPORT MISSION GAVE EXTENSIVE BRIEFING ON THE GENERAL FUNCTIONS AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF SINAI FIELD MISSION TO BRITISH GROUP IN LONDON APRIL 20. BRITISH TEAM COMPRISED OF FOUR OFFICERS REPRESENTING FCO, MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND THE INTELLIGENCE ESTABLISHMENT, HAD IN MID-APRIL FINISHED BRITISH STUDY REQUESTED BY FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN ON FEASIBILITY OF APPLYING ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE MEASURES AND DEMILITARIZED ZONES TO ISRAELI-SYRIAN AND ISRAELI-JORDANIAN BORDERS AS PART OF PEACE SETTLEMENT. BRITISH TEAM THEREFORE GREATLY APPRECIATED BRIEFING.

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2. BRITISH TEAM GAVE US SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS OF THEIR PAPER, WHICH THEY STRESSED OWEN HAD NOT YET SEEN. AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE, THE BRITISH TEAM HAD TRIED TO PROJECT AS REALISTICALLY AS POSSIBLE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE MINIMAL ISRAELI MILITARY POSITION REQUIREMENT WOULD BE TO ASSURE DEFENSIBLE BORDERS. IN DISCUSSING THEIR PAPER, BRITISH AGREED WITH US THAT CIVILIAN TRAFFIC

IN POPULATED AREAS WOULD ADD COMPLICATIONS TO THE DESIGN AND OPERATIONS OF AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM, AND THAT SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES WOULD HAVE TO BE TAILORED TO SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHIC AREAS. THEY THOUGHT SENSORS COULD BE USED FOR TRACKING TERRORIST INFILTRATION ONLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER CONTROLS REQUIRING SECURITY PERSONNEL. THEY ALSO NOTED THE PROBLEM OF IDENTIFYING THE ACTUAL NATIONAL OWNERSHIP OF APPROACHING VEHICLES WHEN BOTH SIDES USE THE SAME KINDS OF VEHICLES SUCH AS TANKS, AND WERE TOLD THAT THIS PROBLEM IS CURRENTLY BEING SOLVED IN THE SINAI FIELD MISSION BY USING OBSERVERS AND REMOTELY CONTROLLED IMAGING EQUIPMENT.

3. THE BRITISH TEAM TOLD US THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT DIFFICULTY THEY CAME UP WITH IS THE PROBLEM OF ALLOWING THE ISRAELIS WHAT THE LATTER WOULD CONSIDER ADEQUATE EARLY WARNING TIME FOR ANY ADVANCE OF SYRIAN TANKS IF THE ISRAELIS WITHDREW FROM GOLAN. IF THE ISRAELIS SHOULD AGREE TO WITHDRAW THEIR TANKS TO THE JUNE 4, 1967 LINE IN THE VALLEY, THEY ESTIMATE THAT IT WOULD TAKE THEM THREE AND ONE HALF HOURS TO GET THEIR TANKS BACK UP ON TO THE HEIGHTS AND ASSUME ADEQUATE DEFENSIVE POSITIONS TO MEET A SYRIAN ADVANCE. THEREFORE, IF A PEACE SETTLEMENT WERE TO PROVIDE FOR THE SYRIANS TO WITHDRAW THEIR TANKS TO A LINE WHERE EARLY WARNING ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS WOULD GIVE THE ISRAELIS IN THE VALLEY ADEQUATE NOTION OF THE START OF ANY SYRIAN

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ADVANCE, THE SYRIAN ARMOR WOULD HAVE TO BE WITHDRAWN TO SUCH A GREAT DISTANCE THAT IT WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE SYRIAN REGIME. THE BRITISH TEAM ALSO NOTED THAT FROM THE ISRAELI POINT OF VIEW THERE ARE NO ADEQUATE SURVEILLANCE SITES BACK OF THE HILLS IN THE LINE THE ISRAELIS NOW OCCUPY ON THE SYRIAN FRONT. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE BRITISH TEAM CONCLUDED THAT THE BEST THAT COULD BE ARRANGED ON THE ISRAELI-SYRIAN FRONT WAS A SERIES OF PRIMARILY "POLITICAL PHASING" MOVES OVER LONG TIME PERIODS, WHICH WOULD HOPEFULLY ALLOW ISRAELI CONFIDENCE IN SYRIAN PEACEFUL INTENTIONS TO DEVELOP, WITH ELECTRONIC AND DEMILITARIZED ZONE MEASURES ONLY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUCH A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. WITH REGARD TO WITHDRAWAL ON THE WEST BANK, THEY THOUGHT THE MOST THE ISRAELIS COULD BE PERSUADED TO DO WOULD BE TO ADOPT A MODIFIED "ALLON PLAN".

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4. THE BRITISH SAID THAT THE PAPER AS DRAFTED, CONSISTING OF SOME 15 PAGES PLUS DETAILED ANNEXES, IS INTENDED TO BE CONVEYED TO USG. HOWEVER, THEY SPECULATED THAT OWEN MAY REQUEST CHANGES BEFORE APPROVING ITS RELEASE TO US. WE NOTED THAT OWEN IS LEAVING APRIL 24 FOR HIS VISIT TO EGYPT AND SYRIA (APRIL 24-27) AND MIGHT BE ABLE TO READ THE PAPER BEFORE THEN.

5. WE ASSUME THAT OUR BRIEFING OF THE BRITISH ON THE SINAI OPERATION MAY BE USED AS A BASIS OF FURTHER REVISION OF THEIR PAPER. IN ANY EVENT WE BELIEVE THEY WILL WISH TO SOLICIT OUR VIEWS AND HAVE EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS OF THEIR PAPER AFTER IT IS GIVEN TO US. THE BRITISH UNDERSTAND THAT NO WESTERN EUROPEAN POWERS EXCEPT UK HAVE DONE SUCH A STUDY, AND WOULD WISH TO KEEP THEIR STUDY IN "US-UK EYES ONLY" CHANNELS.

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